

4 STORIES.

THE LADY BEATRICE. II. THE ARTIST'S TRIUMPH. THE GIPSY GIRL. THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

THE LADY BEATRICE. II

by Mrs. Mary. V. SPENCER.

CHAPTER II.

We left the lady Beatrice alone in the apartment whither her uncle had conducted her on their arrival in Venice, brooding over his parting words " that she should only leave the chamber to become the bride of his nephew." The agony of her feelings it would be impossible to portray. Again and again she went to the window, but the distance from it to the canal beneath precluded all hope of an escape. More than once she repeated her efforts at the door, but it was securely fastened. At length, after a fourth fruitless attempt at the lock, she burst into a flood of tears, and throwing herself on a couch, covered her face with her hands, and wept uncontrollably. She was still sobbing violently when a hand was laid on her, and starting up with sudden surprise she saw an aged female domestic of the upper class standing before her.

" Oh! is it you, nurse?" she said, «I thought I had not one friend in the world left, and perhaps," she continued, recoiling back a moment, " even you have deserted me. But no it cannot, cannot be. You are still my own nurse—you have hushed me in infancy, soothed me in sickness, guided me with your counsel in my later years, and now—now when I am alone and beset with dangers you will not surely betray me!" and Beatrice clasped her hands and gazed up into the eyes of her visitor, with a look so eloquent in its pleading that even a harder heart than that of the aged domestic would have been melted.

" No, my dear child," answered the nurse, while the tears stood in her eyes, " I will not betray you, not for all the gold and promises the duke can make. Cheer up sweet lady,

you are not wholly without friends. Dry your tears now and listen to me. There that is right. Now wait till I have secured the door lest some one might intrude—and now we will go to the embrasure of the window farthest from the entrance in order to baffle an eaves-dropper if one should happen to be outside.

" You know, my child," continued the nurse, " that for nearly two years I have been in the Bormatic family, but this morning I received a message from your uncle, that if I would once more join his family he would take it as a favor. I always loved you and left you only from necessity, and you may judge how glad I was to accept his offer. When I came here, your uncle told me that he had accepted a suitor for you in the person of his nephew; but that, as you seemed averse to the union, he depended on my influence with you to persuade you to listen to so advantageous a proposal. He said that, if I would second his views in the matter he would give a purse of ducats, sufficient to make me rich all the rest of my days; and as he did so he smiled, thinking he had completely bound me to him. But he little knows me. I would sooner part with this finger, or for that matter with all my fingers, than do anything, my dear lady, that was displeasing to you. But I did not tell him so. I saw, at once, that that would have spoiled everything. So I told him that I would enter into his views."

" Nurse! nurse ! then indeed I have no one to succor me," said Beatrice.

"You wrong me, sweet lady—you misunderstand me," eagerly replied the nurse; "see you not that it was necessary to deceive your uncle before I could gain admittance to you, much less aid you? Well, I told him I would enter into his views and do all I could to forward your union. So he bid me come to you at once. And now I am here, but not to aid any one save you. Tell me all that has past, so that we can together form some plan how to act"

Beatrice accordingly narrated the events which we have given to our readers in the last chapter. When she had finished, the nurse sat some time in abstracted thought. At length she spoke,

" I have it—I have it, dearest mistress,—we must apply to Signor Andanta."

" Alas!" replied Beatrice, " he is far away, besides what could he do if he were in Venice?"

"Do much, sweet lady; and in Venice he is, unless my eyes deceived me this morning."

"What say you? Is he indeed in Venice? Where did you see him? Are you certain?" were the rapid enquiries of Beatrice.

"Softly, my dear child," said the nurse with a smile, "I will answer your questions as fast as I can. First then I say I saw the Signor this morning. I saw him in Venice, for I have not been out of the city for a month. I saw him on the Rialto. And I am as certain it was the Signor as that I am speaking to you now. There, I have answered your questions, and now let me tell you my plan."

"I am eager to hear it," said Beatrice, smiling, in despite of her situation, at the particularity of the nurse.

"Well then we must be aided by the Signor. I met him, as I say, on the Rialto, and he stopped a minute as he always does, for he was ever a kind youth, to speak with me. He asked me how I had been, and I naturally told him where I was going. When he heard that your uncle was in Venice he seemed surprised, and instantly asked me if you were here. Now the first thing I had asked the messenger who came after me was whether you were in Venice, so I told the Signor that you were. At this he seemed more surprised, and then, slipping a ducat into my hand, he asked me if I would bear his love to you, and say that he was going across the Alps to the wars. He hinted that, if you would be so good as to send him a reply, I might find him on the Rialto a couple of hours after noon. Now what I propose is this. Let me go to him and enlist him in our cause. We will have him here with a gondola to-night, and I will see if your escape from the palace cannot be managed. Once free you should seek your aunt at Rome, and solicit her protection against your uncle here. And then you can have the Signor in despite of the Duke."

"Hush! hush!—it is a fearful venture," said Beatrice, "and then—then the vile things will be said of such a flight. Oh! nurse, is there no other way to escape this dreadful marriage?"

"None, my sweet lady; and what is there so dreadful in this? Do not young ladies every day elope with their lovers? Why if I was threatened as you are, I would fly with any one, and anywhere, so I but escaped."

At this instant, a footstep was heard in the corridor without, and directly a hand was laid on the lock of the door. Beatrice hesitated no longer.

"Go-go," she gasped, "there is my uncle, arrange everything. I will do as you say."

The nurse paused no longer, but hastened to unbar the door. The person proved to be a messenger to summon her to the noontide meal. She left the apartment, with a parting whisper to Beatrice to confide all in her.

The course of our tale now carries us to the place of St. Mark. The hour was evening. The night was calm and lustrous. Not a cloud obscured the sky, and the moon sailing onward in silent majesty, flooded the promenade with her glorious light, and flung the quaint shadows of the Ducal Palace, and of the column of St. Mark across the scene. Men of every nation could be seen around. There was the Englishman from his distant isle, the Frenchman from the sunny banks of the Loire, the German from the free cities of the Rhine, the dark-eyed Spaniard from the mountains of Andalusia, the wily Greek from the Ionian coasts, the Jew in his pointed cap and long peculiar gown, and even the Mahomedan, with his turban, his flowing beard, and his ill-concealed scorn for the followers of the Cross.

Through these picturesque groups the Signor Andanta held his way at the hour above mentioned. His elastic step, and beaming eye, betokened the unusual elevation of his spirits. He had proceeded some distance in the crowd alone, when he accosted an individual dressed as a gondolier. The two then retired behind one of the massy pillars of St. Mark's place, and were soon engaged in a low but earnest conversation. We shall favor our readers with its purport

"I depend in you, Pietro," said the Signor, "you have been to me a faithful servant during many years, and this act will be another test of your fidelity. You know all my life, even to its secrets. I need not hesitate to tell you then that the Lady Beatrice, after having resisted every persuasion on my part to induce her to elope, has at length been driven to this alternative by the tyranny of her uncle. She has sent her nurse to tell me that if I will have a gondola near the Duke's palace toward midnight, she will be ready there with her companion to fly. On you, therefore, I depend. We must move with great caution, else our plot will be discovered, for this place is full of spies. I have chosen this public spot to converse with you as less likely to awaken suspicion. Be ready with a gondola to take me up near the Rialto a half hour before midnight. We will then hasten to the Vivaldo palace, receive our fair charge, and skim over the lagunes to the main land. If we can once get out of the Venetian territory we will be safe. I have been to the main land and provided horses there for our party. You will not fail me. Wait at the

Rialto for me."

The man bowed in acknowledgment, muffled himself up carelessly, and then sauntered out among the gay groups on the promenade. In a few minutes he was lost to sight, when the Signor moved in an opposite direction.

At that very hour two men were busily engaged in conversation in the Vivaldo palace. One of them is already known to the reader in the person of Beatrice's guardian—the other was a harsh, sinister looking young man of about eight-and-twenty. This latter individual was the nephew of the Duke. He was speaking at the time,

"You say well, uncle, sharp measures must be used, if we cannot prevail otherwise. The girl I am determined to possess, even though Sathanus and all his legions should come up against me. Nor should we hesitate to punish the lover for his presumption. I have brought hither a good bravo, who is even now waiting without—he has done one or two jobs for me before. I saw the Signor myself to-day, and the story goes that he is about to join the army of the emperor. He had a quarrel luckily to-day, as I have learnt by the spies I set to watch him the instant I knew he was in Venice. Now this gives us the game."

"How?" said the uncle, pretending not to understand his nephew.

"Thus, uncle mine," said the speaker, with a sardonic grin, "I will set my bravo here on him. He will be stabbed to-night, wherever he can be found, or, if not tonight, to-morrow. The blow will be attributed to his antagonist in this quarrel, and so the Signor will be got out of the way without suspicion attaching to us. We shall gain two things beside, by this—we shall punish the presumption of the fellow, and leave the road for myself into Beatrice's affections open."

The Duke made no verbal reply, but he smiled at the speaker with a peculiar meaning. The younger man waited no longer, but withdrew for a few minutes. When he returned he said nothing, but gave a significant nod. The Duke knew by the gesture that the fate of the Signor was sealed.

The last chime of the eleventh hour had been struck when a stealthy figure might have been seen creeping after the Signor as he took his way from the front of the Ducal palace toward the Rialto. The lover sauntered leisurely along, for it wanted yet a full half hour to the time when he had appointed to meet his servant. As he passed the

colonnade of St. Mark, whose massy pillars still attest the magnificence of their builders, he paused a minute to look back on the scene he was leaving. The hum of many tongues still rose up from the crowded thoroughfare, although the groups were rapidly thinning away. Our hero looked at the motley assembly a moment, and then raised his eyes to the moon which was sailing peacefully across the firmament. The stealthy figure which we have pointed out seized the opportunity to draw noiselessly near to the Signor, who, unconscious that any one dogged his footsteps, continued gazing at the placid mistress of night in rapt delight. Several minutes thus passed during which the bravo—for the figure was his—approached nearer and nearer to the lover. At length the bravo stood directly behind his victim. Quick as lightning he plucked a dagger from its hiding place in his bosom, raised it aloft until it flashed in the cold moonshine, and then drove it swiftly and unerringly into the back of our hero. The Signor gave a groan and fell as if dead to the earth. A group hard by heard the fall and rushed hastily toward him ; but ere they had reached the prostrate man the bravo had disappeared behind the neighboring pillars and escaped undetected into the crowd on the promenade.

" Is he dead?" said one of those who had come up, as the body of the wounded man was lifted up.

"He breathes yet—but the blood is flowing fast,—I fear it is a mortal wound; does any one know him?" was the reply.

" A leech—a leech—make way for the leech," shouted a voice outside the group, for, by this time, a crowd, running from all quarters, had gathered around the wounded man.

The leech jostled his way through the crowd, approached the patient, and stooping down bent over him.

" Does any one know him?" he said, looking around the crowd.

" None, I believe," said the man who had asked that question previously, " but here is a purse of good ducats which rolled from his pocket in his fall."

" Ah!" said the leech, extending his hand for it, " I will be a friend to the poor youth. He is badly wounded, I see; it may be even unto death. But we will do all that mortal can do for him—for, saith not Hippocrates

Tend ye the sick and suffering, though they be strangers on the highway.' I will take him to mine own house. Make way there—bear him to a gondola—softly, softly. Thank you, good friends all. The youth shall be taken care of—the work of some bravo I suppose."

With these words the leech ordered the gondola—for he had already embarked his insensible patient—to make all haste for his house. The man promised to obey. But the leech's house was at some distance, and the great clock struck twelve as they stopped at its portal. The leech ordered the insensible body to be carried in, and then followed it himself.

(To be continued.)

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THE ARTIST'S TRIUMPH.

It was about twilight, when, in the refectory of the Dominican convent at Milan, might have been seen a man, apparently in the meridian of his days, with a high forehead, regular features and calm dark eyes. He was seated before a large, unfinished picture, with his head leaning on his hand and gazing thoughtfully on the canvass. Suddenly he sighed, and then rising paced the apartment quickly.

"Yes!" said he at length; "six months have passed since I commenced this picture. Tomorrow the Duke comes; and the head of Judas is still unfinished. It must be completed," he resumed after a pause, "it must be finished to-night. If not I am ruined. My patron will dismiss me and then the triumph of my tormentor will be complete. How long and how painfully have I studied to give a proper expression to Judas and yet I have not succeeded."

He sat down and sketching the head again, sighed despairingly and then erased it. No sooner had he done this, than the door opened and a tall and athletic man entered the apartment. He was the Prior of the convent. A smile of triumph played on his features, as he walked up to the artist.

"Leonardo Da Vinci," said he, "my triumph is complete : your work will not be finished

to-morrow, and you will be dismissed from the Duke's service, which will be your just reward," and he laughed loud and scornfully.

Leonardo fixed his dark eyes calmly upon the speaker and eyed him with an artist's vision. At length he replied,

" And who, but you who have every day interrupted me, has detained me?"

" Senor Da Vinci," said the prior ironically, " I congratulate you on the Duke's favor, when I have given an account of your punctuality."

" I can assure you I shall not lose it," replied Leonardo.

The prior laughed aloud and quitted the apartment.

"Yes," repeated he, "I shall not lose it." He took up his pencil and in a quarter of an hour, cried out in an ecstasy of joy, " I have it now ! I have it!"

The hours flew by, and the picture was finished at day-break.

" Now," said Leonardo, as he lowered a curtain before his great work, " now for my triumph."

" Well," said the Duke, walking up and giving Leonardo a friendly shake of the hand, " you have truly had a short time, but so small the more honor. But I forget, gentlemen," said he to the persons present, " allow me to introduce you to Senor Leonardo Da Vinci, of whose skill you all have heard. Da Vinci bowed. Then turning round, the Duke said " remove the curtain." Leonardo stood pale and immovable, and the prior, confident from the artist's manner that the work was unfinished, pulled aside the curtain, when the complete picture was exposed to view. A murmur of applause ran through the crowd, and all eyes were fixed on the prior and Judas.

" It is he! it is he!" they exclaimed; and to the monk's confusion, he beheld his own portrait on the shoulders of Judas. Leonardo was silent: his triumph was complete.

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THE GIPSY GIRL.

by Percie H. Selton.

It was a summer evening. The scene was a rural lane in old England, overshadowed by hoary trees, which might have dated back to the time of the conqueror. As the soft mellow light of sunset streamed betwixt the moss-grown trunks of the trees, a young man, attired in a shooting jacket, and mounted on a sturdy pony, might have been seen slowly pacing down the lane. But although there was nothing peculiar in his attire, it was not so with his face and air, both of which were obviously above the common order. His features, indeed, were singularly handsome. A dark eye, a broad forehead, and a fine contour of face were united to a frank, good-humored expression of countenance that prepossessed the gazer at once in his favor. He jogged on for some time listlessly, when suddenly his eye caught the glare of a gipsy fire through the woods.

"Ha," he said, "are these pilferers again about ? I will have them driven off this very night The villains? Our house has suffered enough by them."

"Shall I tell your fortune, good sir?" said a clear, silvery voice, suddenly interrupting the muttered soliloquy of the speaker.

The young man had by this time reached a rustic gate, opening out on a glade in the woods, and, as the voice which he knew to be that of a female addressed him. he looked up in some surprise.

" Kind sir, will you have your fortune told 1" said the same silvery voice again, and, as the eye of the young man fell on the speaker, she blushed until the clear blood shone through her dark Andalusian skin. The young baronet, for such was the rank of the rider, gazed on her in surprise, and as he marked the beauty of the speaker his maledictions against her race faded from his thoughts. The gipsy girl was indeed a splendid creature. Those only who have looked on the divine sibyl in the Vatican can form an idea of the wild and overpowering beauty of the young Hungarian. She was at that period of life when the girl has just budded ip to the woman, and when every

charm has mellowed down into its most voluptuous beauty. Her dark lustrous eye, the Grecian mouth and chin, and the long silken hair flowing picturesquely down from her head dress, formed a picture, which, when viewed in the approaching twilight, had a beauty almost supernatural. The young man gazed on her for a moment, completely overpowered by her bewildering beauty, and then, scarce conscious of what he did, extended her his hand. She took it, looked at it a moment, and burst into tears. Still more surprised at this conduct, he gazed at her enquiringly a moment, and as he gazed he felt a strange interest in the gipsy girl. What could be her motive?

Was her agitation real or affected? He was still doubtful to which to ascribe it when the girl raised her eyes still wet with tears, and controlling her emotion by a violent effort, said,

" Pardon me, but I am not what I seem—this life is hateful to me—I cannot tell your fortune. You are young and happy, may you never be otherwise, go, and God's blessing go with you."

The girl spoke almost incoherently. If his interest had been awakened before, it was now tenfold increased. But the fear that all this was a well acted part, induced him to reply in a severer strain than his feelings dictated.

" Why are you not what you seem?" he said, " and why, if you hate the life you lead, did you waylay me here to tell my fortune?"

The gipsy looked proudly up at this, and her dark eye flashed as she replied, ,

"To save your property, perhaps your life," and looking cautiously around as if to see whether the very leaves did not wait to listen, she laid her hand on his arm, and whispered, " There is a plot to waylay you, and to-night it is to be executed. Do not pursue your way through the wood as you had intended, but return at once to the Hall. Believe me, oh! believe me," she continued, becoming more earnest in her language, although her cheek grew red, and her voice quivered with emotion—" you may think me unworthy of credit because I come of a hated race, but, as I said before, I am not of them, though alas! I know not who I am. Do not think that I am an agent to lead you into danger," she continued, as she saw a look of incredulity on the young man's face, "as there is a God above us, I warn you aright. I know not why I have ventured thus boldly to accost you, unless it is that something in these old woods, in this flowery lane reminds me of happy days I once enjoyed when I was a child, in some country retreat

not unlike this. I heard the plot formed to waylay you, and as you had passed here last night, and as I understood you would pass here again this evening on your way to the village, I determined to wait for you and fore-warn you of your danger. I cannot say more, for it might lead them to suspect me. Keep on till the 'next turning and then strike back to the Hall. Oh! do not—do not neglect this, adieu."

During this hurried and agitated speech the young man had been deprived of the power of utterance by the variety of emotions that had filled his bosom. The manner of the girl was that of one-speaking the truth, but yet there was a lurking distrust of her in his mind. He would have spoken, however, when she ceased, and endeavored to have elicited something more from her which would convince him or not of her truth, but, as she finished the last word, she turned hastily away and disappeared in the woods, leaving her auditor undecided what course to take. Nor after more than a minute's delay, did he know whether to adopt or reject her advice. At length, however, he resolved to trust in her. Her beauty and her Sara, more than her story, led him to this conclusion.

"I will take her advice," he said, "for surely she is too young to engage in a plot to waylay, and perhaps murder one who has done her no wrong. Besides, if she deceives me, I can at least take care of two gipsy knaves, and if more assault me, and harm comes of it, there will be those left who will avenge my death," and soliloquizing thus to himself he jerked the rein of his horse and pushed on his way.

The twilight was now deepening fast, and the young man could just pick his way along the narrow lane. When he reached the cross-road, he turned his bridle, and was soon on his way back to the Hall.

"What a strange interest I feel in that gipsy girl," he said to himself, "her face seems like one I have seen somewhere, perhaps in a dream. The old philosophers say that when we feel this toward a stranger, their fate is somehow connected with ours—what unaccountable link connects her with me? I have every reason to hate her people, for they kidnapped my sweet little cousin, whom I remember as a smiling babe, from this very manor, and God knows that, although her death—for dead indeed she must be—has given me broad lands, yet would I rather that she lived than that I gained wealth at her cost Am I not wrong," he said, checking his horse, "to be deluded thus by any of the accursed race? It is surely a plot to lure me into their hands. But why should I fear? Besides the girl said she was not of their race, and she wore an air of truth. I would give any thing could I unravel this riddle. Shall I advance or even now go back? Ah! here

come John and Thomas too—a lucky meeting."

The scene was changed, as he spoke, by the appearance of a couple of game-keepers on the road a few paces ahead. He called them instantly to his side, and in reply to their respectful salutations asked them if they had met any one on the road. They replied in the negative. This at once satisfied him that the gipsy girl had informed him aright, but he now resolved to face the danger, availing himself, however, of the aid of his two armed game-keepers. Without revealing to them his intentions, he told them to repair, by a cross-cut through the woods, to the place which the gipsy girl had named as that of the contemplated attack, and there, secreting themselves in the underwood, to await his coming.

"If you see me, still do not move. Lie by till I call you. Why—you will learn in good time. The crosscut is a mile nearer than the road, and you will reach the place a quarter of an hour before me. Be cautious, and if you meet with other men, do not betray your vicinity. Only look to the priming of your guns," and

with these words he dismissed the men, and began to retrace his steps.

"The villains," he said, "I shall catch them now in their own trap. Thanks to that sybil-like creature for her warning. Perhaps I owe her my life—my sister shall seek her out and reward her. What a splendid creature she is—and how her face haunts me! Ah! I shall have these murderous wretches in my power, caught in the very act, of highway robbery, in less than an hour." Thus soliloquizing to himself—now of the robbers, now of the gipsy girl—the young man retraced his steps until he reached the lane, when he continued his journey as he had at first projected.

Stanhope Vaux had a bold heart, as was evinced by his present daring movement, but as he drew near the place which the gipsy girl had pointed out as the spot where he was to be waylaid, he began to have uneasy misgivings as to the result of his undertaking. The least failure in the game-keeper to reach the appointed spot in time, would disconcert the whole plot, and leave him at the mercy of the gipsies, unless, as was highly improbable, he could repulse them alone. As he entered the low, dark dell, which the gipsy girl had told him was the spot selected for the attack, these misgivings acquired tenfold force. His heart, however, did not fail him, but the consciousness of his peril was increased. He rode, therefore, slowly and cautiously, narrowly watching every thicket, and he was not consequently taken by surprise, when a man, rushing suddenly from a covert, endeavored to check his horse, at the same time aiming a blow with a

bludgeon at the head of Stanhope, which the young man dexterously avoided. Upon the instant, three powerful gipsies sprang into the road, and Stanhope found himself engaged with four persons, each one of whom was fully his equal. His own men did not seem to be within call, for, although he shouted for aid, no succor came. Luckily he was armed with a heavy riding whip, and backing his horse against the bank, he boldly faced his foes, dealing his blows around him with such effect that, for some minutes, he kept his assailants at bay. The odds, however, against him were too great for ultimate triumph.

Three of the i pen still kept pressing on his front, and though the fourth one had momentarily disappeared, Stanhope knew his absence only boded further peril. Nor was he mistaken. Suddenly he heard a bough crackle above him, and looking hastily up he beheld the other gipsy on the hank overhead, in the very act of levelling a blow at him with a cudgel. It was the work of an instant to dash his horse forward, but this only exposed his rear as well as his front to the foe. The gipsies saw their advantage, and rushed with loud shouts on him, while their companion, springing again into the road, assailed Stanhope from behind. The young man felt that the robbers were overpowering him, and that, in another instant, he would be wholly in their power. They were already inflamed by his resistance, and two of them were bloody with contusions, received from his loaded whip, so that he knew he should obtain no mercy from his conquerors. But he resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible. Circling his heavy whip once more around his head, he aimed a last blow at the foremost of his assailants, which brought the gipsy reeling to the earth, but, as Stanhope was recovering himself after the blow, the robber from behind, leaped on him, and pinioning the young man's arms in his own, secured their prey. At the same instant another of the gipsies rushed on the now defenceless Stanhope, and drawing a knife, raised it as if to plunge it in his bosom.

"Drive it into him," growled the one who had acted as the leader, "dead men tell no tales!"

"Hold! on your life," said a voice; and, at the moment, a hand pushed back the weapon, and the gipsy girl interposed betwixt Stanhope and his assailant.

"Perdition take the girl," said the first speaker, with a curse, "give her the cold steel for her interference—this is none of her business."

The man whose murderous intentions had been for a moment baffled by the daring of

the girl, jerked back his arm at these words, and raising his knife once more, aimed it at her bosom. Stanhope saw the attempt, and, by a sudden effort, loosed an arm, so as partially to ward off the stroke; but the attempt was not wholly successful, for the keen blade, although diverted from her heart, was buried in her shoulder. The warm blood gushed over her swelling bosom.

"By all that is holy you shall suffer for this, villains —murderers!" shouted the infuriated Stanhope, as he saw the brutal wound given, and gaining, in the excitement of the moment, the strength of a dozen men, he shook off his assailants, and springing before the fainting girl, interposed his arm just in time to save her from a second and more deadly blow. But the contest was too unequal. Pausing only to recover themselves from the repulse, the gipsies again dashed on the defenceless Stanhope, and a surer and more unerring blow than had yet been made, was aimed at his heart; but at that instant, the sharp report of a gun echoed across the twilight, and the assailant, leaping up, fell dead at the feet of Stanhope, who stood unharmed. Simultaneously another shot rang on the air, and the leader of the robbers fell also wounded; while the two game-keepers rushed out from the wood, and hastened to their master's side. The whole scene passed with the rapidity of thought, and for a while Stanhope thought it was all a dream. A moment before, the blade of the assassin had been aimed at his bosom, and now the robber lay at his feet in the silence of death.

Stanhope's first thought was of the gipsy girl, whose unlooked for interposition had saved his life. She had fainted, and was now lying senseless on the ground.

Lifting her gently up, he endeavored to staunch the blood from her wound, and in doing so he noticed, to his surprise, a ribbon, to which was suspended a miniature in a gold case. Wondering that such an ornament should be in her possession, he could not avoid looking at it. The first glance at the picture increased his astonishment. It was an old painting, and somewhat defaced, but the features were identical with those of a portrait of the late lady of the manor, the wife of his uncle, whose heir he had been. As he glanced, in curious surprise, from the miniature to the features of the inanimate girl, he saw with astonishment a counterpart of the picture, and the reason why the face of the beautiful gipsy had seemed to him not unknown, flashed on him at once. A wild thought shot through his mind —could it be!—yet no!—his reason was bewildered. He turned involuntarily to the wounded leader of the gipsies, whom the game-keepers were securing, and detected the man regarding him with a smile of meaning scorn.

"What know you of this mystery! In God's name speak! She said she was no gipsy—who is she?"

The man smiled as before, but made no answer.

"Answer me, and you shall go free—is she, as I suspect, my cousin?"

The game-keepers looked at each other, as if they thought their master's senses were wandering, but still the gipsy made no reply except by that meaning smile.

"I conjure you—I implore you, man, brute, devil, or whatever you are, satisfy my curiosity! I give you my honor you shall not be harmed, ask any thing else and I will give it to you."

"Ah! that is more like it," said the gipsy, with a brutal laugh, "why could you not have come at once to the point? I know, as you suspect, much. But I am cursedly wounded,—let me be taken care of—sign me a deed, giving me an annuity of fifty pounds a year, and then I will tell what you wish to know. But until that is done I will say nothing."

Stanhope saw that it would be useless to urge the gipsy farther, and besides his attention was again engrossed by the wounded girl beside him, who now began to show signs of life. The strange interest which he had felt in this lovely being at first, was now exchanged for a deeper and warmer sentiment, and he gazed on her face and thought how she had risked her life for him, the idea that she might be his long-lost cousin, made his heart thrill with delicious emotion. With more than a brother's care he lifted her on his horse, and staunching the blood as he best might, proceeded to the nearest cottage, where further aid was secured. Meanwhile the wounded gipsy, in furtherance of Stanhope's bargain, was secretly conveyed to the Hall.

A month had passed. In the deep embrasure of the great window of the dining-room of the old Hall, looking out over a rich sunset prospect of hill, wood, and meadow, stood Stanhope Vaux, and at his side, half-reclining on a couch, was the gipsy girl. Her beautiful face was pale with recent illness, but her dark eye was even softer than when we last saw her. She was no longer attired in her gipsy garb, but a rich robe enveloped her voluptuous form. She leaned on one arm and gazed thoughtfully on the floor. Stanhope looked on her abstractedly in a reverie apparently as deep as her own.

Circumstances had greatly altered since we last presented them to our readers. The gipsy had made a full confession. Isabel—for such was the real name of our heroine—was the only child of the late possessor of Vaux Hall. Her father, a stern, bad man, had, when she was quite a child, deeply wronged a man by the name of Dawlor, one of his tenantry, and the man, determining on revenge, and knowing that the baronet's heart could only be approached through his affection for his child, had stolen her away, and eventually joined a gipsy camp. Isabel, however, was old enough to remember, although but dimly, that she had not always been a gipsy; and, although the man who stole her away, had endeavored to eradicate this impression from her mind, he had been unsuccessful. As she grew up, nothing could induce her to adopt the arts of the gipsy camp, and often would she have deserted it had she known whither to fly. By what fatality Dawlor, who had risen to be a leader of his gang, had been led to return to Vaux Hall, we do not know; but the scenery in its vicinity had awakened strange emotions in Isabel's bosom, as if a dream of the past had been realized. Whether Dawlor's hatred to her father had descended to the heir we cannot say; but knowing that Stanhope often rode in the forest after dark, he projected this robbery. The woman's nature of Isabel led her to revolt at this plot, which happily she had overheard. The rest is known to our readers. The identity of Isabel was proved, not only by the numerous trinkets stolen with her, and which the gipsy now restored, but by the old nurse, who recognized her charge by a scar on the arm, produced by her own carelessness in suffering the infant to bump itself severely. The reader may well imagine that the old woman wept tears of joy on the bosom of her long-lost[^] but now recovered child. All this, we repeat, had transpired since we last saw Stanhope and Isabel; and the knowledge of it is necessary to understand the following conversation.

We have said that Isabel was gazing abstractedly on the floor. At length, however, she looked up timidly to her lover's face. Their eyes met. Why did Isabel blush over brow, neck and bosom? Why did Stanhope betray equal emotion?

" Isabel," he said, after a pause, taking her hand, and his voice was perhaps somewhat tremulous as he spoke, " we love each other—do we not?"

The bosom of the beautiful girl heaved with emotion, and her long eye-lashes dropped to her cheek, while her glance once more sought the ground. But she made no answer.

" Isabel, dear Isabel," said Stanhope, dropping on his knees beside her, " you are my equal, in birth, why then should you refuse to be mine? I know we love each other. Dismiss your scruples then. Say, dear Isabel, say you will be mine."

The impassioned tones of the speaker increased the agitation of the beautiful girl, and she could scarcely murmur a reply, but though the words were broken and low, they conveyed the wished for response, coupled, however, with a declaration of her own unworthiness.

" You wrong yourself, dear Isabel," said the glad lover, imprinting his first kiss holily on her brow, " and so," he continued, rising suddenly as a lady entered the apartment, " my sweet sister will tell you. Think not love has blinded me—is it not so, Mary?"

They were married and went abroad; and for months it was the delightful task of Stanhope to educate his young wife's opening mind. When, after an absence of two years they returned to England, there was not, in the whole county, a more beautiful or accomplished brida than Isabel.

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THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

AN OWBS THUS TALE.

The grey morning was already dawning when a miserable wretch turned into'a dirty alley, and entering a low, ruinous door, groped through a narrow entry, and paused at the entrance of a room within. That degraded being Had once been a wealthy man, respected by his neighbors, surrounded by friends. But alas! the social glass bad first lured him to indulgence, and then to inebriety, until he was now a common drunkard.

The noise of his footsteps had been heard within, for the creaking door was timidly opened, and a pole emaciated boy, about nine years old, stepped out on the landing, and asked in mingled anxiety and dread,

" Is that you, father?"

" Yes, wet to the skin,—curse it," said the man— "why ain't you abed and sleep, you brat!"

The little fellow shrunk back at this coarse salutation, but still, though shaking with fear, he did not quit his station before the door.

"What are you standing there, gaping for?" said the wretch,— "It's bad enough to hear a sick wife grumbling all day, without having you kept up at night to chime in in the morning,—get to bed, you imp,—do you hear!"

The little fellow did not answer; fear seemed to have deprived him of speech; but still holding on to the door-latch, with an imploring look, he stood right in the way by which his parent would have to enter the room.

"Ain't you going to mind?" said the man with an oath, breaking into a fury, "give me the lamp and go to bed, or I'll break every bone in your body."

"Oh! father don't talk so loud," said the little fellow bursting into tears—"you'll wake mother, she's been worse all day, and hasn't had any sleep till now,"—and as the man made an effort to snatch the candle, the boy, losing all personal fears in anxiety for his sick mother, stood firmly across the drunkard's path and said, "you mustn't,—you mustn't go in."

"What does the brat mean?" broke out the inebriate angrily—"this comes of leaving you to wait on your mother till you learn to be as obstinate as a mule—will you disobey me?—take that, and that, you imp," and raising his hand he struck the little sickly being to the floor, kicked aside his body, and strode into the dilapidated room.

It was truly a fitting place for the home of such a vagabond as he. The walls were low, covered with smoke, and seamed with a hundred cracks. The chimney-piece had once been white, but was now of the greasy lead color of age. The ceiling had lost most of the plaster, and the rain soaking through, dripped with a monotonous tick upon the floor. A few broken chairs, a cracked looking glass, and a three-legged table, on which was a rimless cup, were in different parts of the room. But the most striking spectacle was directly before the gambler. On a rickety bed lay the wife of his bosom, the once rich and beautiful Emily Languenre, who, through poverty, shame, and sickness, had still clung to the lover of her youth. Oh! woman, thy constancy the world cannot shake, nor shame nor misery subdue. Friend after friend had deserted that ruined man; indignity after indignity had been heaped upon him, and deservedly; year by year he had fallen lower and lower in the sink of infamy; and yet still through every mishap that sainted woman had clung to him,— for he was the father of her boy, and

the husband of her youth. It was a hard task for her to perform; but it was her duty, and when all the world deserted him should she too leave him? She had borne much, but alas! nature could endure no more. Health had fled from her cheeks, and her eyes were dim and sunken. She was in the last stage of consumption, but it was not that which was killing her,— she was dying of a broken heart

The noise made by her husband awoke her from her troubled sleep, and she half started up in bed, the hectic fire streaming along her cheek, and a wild, fitful light shooting into her sunken eyes. There was a faint, shadowy smile lighting up her face, but it was as cold as moonlight upon snow. The sight might have moved a felon's bosom, but what can penetrate the seared and hardened heart of drunkenness 1 The man besides was in a passion.

" Blast it, woman," said the wretch, as he reeled into the room—" is this the way you receive me after being out all day in the rain to get something for your brat and you? Come, don't go to whining, I say"—but as his wife uttered a faint cry at his brutality, and fell back senseless on the bed, he seemed to awaken to a partial sense of his condition, he reeled a step or two forward, put his hand up to his forehead, stared wildly around, and then gazing almost vacantly upon her, continued, " but—why—what's the matter?"

His poor wife lay like a corpse before him, but a low voice from the other side of the bed answered, and its tones quivered as they spoke.

" Oh!—mother's dead!" It was the voice of his son who had stolen in, and was now sobbing violently as he tried to raise her head in his little arms. He had been for weeks her only nurse, and had long since learned to act for himself. He bathed her temples, he chafed her limbs, he invoked her wildly to awake.

" Dead!" said the man, and he was sobered at once— "dead, dead," he continued in a tone of horror that chilled the blood, and advancing to the bedside, with eyes starting from their sockets, he laid his hand upon her marble brow, " then, oh, my God! I have murdered her! Emily, Emily, you are not dead,—say so—oh! speak and forgive your repentant husband!" and kneeling by the bedside, he chafed her white, thin hand, watering it with his hot tears as he sobbed her name.

Their efforts, at length, partially restored her, and the first thing she saw upon reviving was her husband weeping by her side, and calling her " Emily!" It was the first time he

had done so for years. It stirred old memories in her heart, and called back the shadowy visions of years long past. She was back in their youthful days, before ruin had blasted her once noble husband, and when all was joyous and bright as her own happy bosom. Woe, shame, poverty, desertion, even his brutal language was forgotten, and she only thought of him as the lover of her youth. Oh! that moment of delight! She faintly threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed there for very joy.

« Can you forgive me, Emily !—I have been a brute, a villain—oh! can you forgive me? I have sinned as never man sinned before, and against such an angel as you. Oh! God annihilate me for my guilt"

" Charles!" said the dying woman in a tone so sweet and low that it floated through that chamber like the whisper of a disembodied spirit—" I forgive you, and may God forgive you too;—but oh! do not embitter this last moment by such an impious wish."

The man only sobbed in reply, but his frame shook with the tempest of agony within him.

"Charles," at last continued the dying woman—"I have long wished for this moment, that I might say something to you about our little Henry."

" God forgive me for my wrongs to him too!" murmured the repentant man.

"I have much to say, and I have but little time to say it in,—I feel that I shall never see another sun." A violent fit of coughing interrupted her.

" Oh! no,—you must not, will not die," sobbed her husband, as he supported her sinking frame—" you 'll live to save your repentant husband. Oh! you will!"

The tears gushed into her eyes, but she only shook her head. She laid her wan hand on his and continued feebly.

" Night and day, for many a long year, have I prayed for this hour, and never, even in the darkest moment, have I doubted it would come; for I have felt that within me which whispered that as all had deserted you and I had not, so in the end you would at last come back to your early feelings. Oh! would it had come sooner— some happiness then might have been mine again in this world,—but God's will be done!—I am weak—I feel I am failing fast—Henry, give me your hand."

The little boy silently placed it in hers, she kissed it, and then laying it within her husband's continued,

" Here is our child—our only born—when I am gone he will have none to take care of him but you, and as God is above, as you love your own blood, and as you value a promise to a dying wife, keep, love, cherish him. Oh! remember that he is young and tender—it is the only thing for which I would care to live"—she paused, and struggled to subdue her feelings, " will you promise me, Charles?"

" I will, as there is a Maker over me, I will," sobbed the man; and the frail bed against which he leaned shook with his emotion.

" And you, Henry, you will obey your father, and be a good boy;—as you love your mother—you will !"

" Oh! yes!" sobbed the little fellow, flinging himself wildly .on his mother's neck, "but mother, dear mother, what shall I do without you!—oh ! don t die!"

"This is too hard," murmured the dying woman, drawing her child feebly to her, "Father give me strength to endure it!"

For a few minutes all was still,—and-nothing broke the silence but the sobs of the father and the boy, and the low, death-like tick of the rain dripping through upon the floor. The child was the first to move. He seemed instinctively to feel that giving way to his grief pained his mother, and gently disengaging himself from her, he hushed his sobs, and leaning on the bed, gazed anxiously into her face. Her eyes were closed, but her lips moved as if in prayer.

"Henry, where are you!" faintly asked the dying mother.

The boy answered in his low, mournful voice.

"Henry,—Henry," she said in a louder tone, and then after a second added, " poor babe, he doesn't hear me."

The little fellow looked up amazed. He knew not yet how the senses gradually fail the dying; he was perplexed ; the tears coursed down his cheeks; and his throat chocked so

that he could not speak. But he placed his hand in his mother's and pressed it

"Come nearer, my son—nearer—the candle wants snuffing—there, lay your face down by mine—Henry, love, I can't see—has the wind—blown—out—the light!"

The bewildered boy gazed wildly into his mother's face, but knew not what to say. He only pressed her hand again.

" Oh! God," murmured the dying woman, her voice growing fainter and fainter—" this is death !—Charles —Henry—Jesus—re—"

The child felt a quick, electric shiver in the hand he clasped, and looking up, saw that his mother had fallen back dead upon the pillow. He knew it all at once. He gave one shriek and fell senseless across her body.

That shriek aroused the drunkard. Starting up from his knees, he gazed wildly on the corpse. He could not endure the look of that still sainted face. He covered his face with his hands and burst into an agony of tears.

Long years have passed since then, and that man is once more a useful member of society. But oh! the fearful price at which his reformation was purchased.
